

Hosmer, Harriet
5-1-61

SCULPTOR'S LIFE FULL OF ROMANCE

Jan 11922

Attention to Browning Hands
Leads to Study of Maker's
Travels and Work.

BY NORA BALL RAGSDALE.

Since the locally owned bronze, Browning hands have come into such prominence recently, the life of the sculptor who made them has taken on a new interest. She was Miss Harriet Hosmer, a cousin of Mrs. Charles Fuller, whom she visited on several occasions, and it was while she was spending some time with Mrs. Fuller that she presented the figure of the clasped hands to the old Terre Haute Woman's club. The club, after passing them about from home to home of the members for a time, decided to give the public an opportunity of enjoying them, placed them in a glass case and put them in the Fairbanks library, from which place they recently were removed and put in a bank for safe keeping.

Taken from "Letters and Memoirs" of Harriet Hosmer, the following will be of general interest in this locality:

"Harriet Goodhue Hosmer, the youngest child of Hiram and Sarah (Grant) Hosmer, was born on the ninth of October, 1830, in Watertown, Mass. From her father, a distinguished physician, she inherited her great mental activity and her independence of character, while from her mother she derived the more artistic elements of her nature. The death of the latter when Harriet was 4 years of age left her and a sister, two years her senior, to the anxious care of their father. Desirous of guarding them against the subtle disease which had robbed him of his wife and two sons, Dr. Hosmer adopted, with his daughters, a method of physical training at that time unusual in the education of girls. 'There is a lifetime,' he said, 'for the cultivation of the mind, but the body develops in a few years, and during that period nothing should be permitted to interfere with its free and healthy growth.'

Outdoor Life.

"Even this wise course proved to be of no avail with the older girl. Her death six years later greatly increased the father's anxiety concerning his re-

turning to America. He enjoyed an out-of-doors life. He gave her a spirited horse, a dog and a gun and at the foot of his garden, by which ran the Charles river, she had her boat house and bath house and indulged in the delights of rowing, swimming and skating. This free and happy life not only brought its reward in the glowing health, the sturdy frame and muscular development of the girl, but it fostered in a heart where lay dormant so great a love of the beautiful in art, an equal love for the beautiful in nature. For miles around there was no wildwood path which she had not explored, the Charles river boasted no shady cove in which her boat had not rested and no neighboring hillside was left unclimbed in her search for mosses and wild flowers.

"As time wore on and Dr. Hosmer saw that she was strong enough to bear the confinement of study, he placed her at school in Boston. She was loath, however, to give up her outdoor delights and, after several years of intermittent study, he decided, as she was entering upon her 16th year, to place her where she would have, in addition to the broadest intellectual culture, a due amount of healthy free-

dom combined with motherly care. This was found in the home-school of Mrs. Charles Sedgewick of Lenox, Mass., then a primitive village amid the Berkshire hills, where the Sabbath began at sundown on Saturday and ended at sunset on Sunday, while now it is one of the most frequented of summer resorts.

Facilities Limited.

"It was in this refined and delightful interior that Harriet developed into womanhood according to her individual bent, without any effort on the part of her teacher to coerce her natural tendencies. * * * During the happy Lenox days Harriet was truly the life of the house. Already the mingling of the grave and gay in her temperament made her wonderfully attractive to minds of varied tone and of diverse ages. Her improvisations, comic lectures, charades and impromptu theatricals, even her daring escapades, were enjoyed by all, including the guests of the family. Among the latter none delighted more than Mrs. Fanny Kemble in these simple frolics.

"In 1849 Harriet quitted Lenox for her home in Watertown and began to prepare for her life's work by taking lessons in modeling. In this she was hampered by ignorance of human anatomy and the inability to obtain from any college in New England a course of instruction in it, for it must be remembered that 60 years ago the facilities in America for even beginning the study of art were but meager. However, in the autumn of 1850 she went to visit her friends in St. Louis and it was there that, through the influence of Wayman Crow, the head of the medical department of the state university, Dr. J. N. McDowell, was induced to throw open the doors of that institution to her and to give her the opportunity of acquiring the knowledge requisite for the prosecution of her art."

"The benefit of their personal union and moral and financial support to the end that a central organization might be formed, the more effectively to meet organized fraud with organized resistance.

Then, their second determination was that the league appoint two poll takers of opposite political parties to take a joint poll of each voting precinct. These poll takers to poll their precincts as often as was necessary and as early and diligently as possible, noting in one column all registrations clearly lawful, and making at the time memoranda of evidence and names of witnesses in each case.

Any additional facts concerning cases or concerning any other violation of the election laws in each precinct, and names of witnesses, coming to the knowledge of the poll takers, or any other member of the organization before the offender has been convicted, or the prosecution of the crime is barred, shall report to the secretary of the League of Voters.

This report shall at any and all times be open for the inspection of the prosecuting attorney and shall be submitted by the league to the grand jury at each session thereof within two years after the time that any offense reported therein was committed.

The third recommendation was that the league shall confer with the board of county commissioners with the sheriff of the county and with the chairmen of the leading political parties in the county and present to them, severally, lists of names of qualified electors of their own political party selected by the

league with a request that all election officers nominated or appointed by the board by the sheriff or by chairman be selected from those lists.

A committee was also appointed by the league to confer with the board in regard to the location of polling places in clean and unobjectionable localities.

The fourth recommendation was that the league suggest to proper authorities the propriety of tendering the election officials the use of the public school buildings and churches wherever necessary to secure proper and desirable polling places.

A mass meeting was held to hear the findings of the committee and besides this they named the organization the "Non Partisan League of Vigo County," an organization admirably equipped for inaugurating and carrying out such reforms as they intended to accomplish. It was organized, so records tell us, "in view of the increased authority and

Brownings.

Much of Miss Hosmer's life was spent in the old world, full of its "ancestral halls" and "picturesque castles." An extract from the "Letters and Memoirs" says: "Later she quit-

ted Italy with its changing life and scenes, and, while lamenting the old Rome, she left the new city to its new birth. It had lost its hold upon her heart. Forsaking marble and workmen, she spent the later years of her life partly in England, partly in America, among those whom she loved and who were devoted to her. She was never idle. The work dreamed of by her would easily have filled another lifetime. But the end came unexpectedly to her and to all."

Briefly the book refers to the Brownings' hands as follows:

"Upon landing in England Miss Hosmer proceeded immediately to Italy. She stopped for a time in Florence and she mentions in her letters that she and Mrs. Jameson breakfasted daily together and that they always dined with the Brownings at Casa Guidi.

"During a winter that Mr. and Mrs. Browning had passed in Rome, Miss Hosmer had made a cast of their hands.

"The history of the hands is very brief," Miss Hosmer said. "In the winter of 1853, my second winter in Rome, I made the personal acquaintance of the Brownings. I then conceived the idea of casting their hands and asked Mrs. Browning if she would consent. She consented if I would cast them, but would not sit for a formature. Consequently I did the casting myself."

DO NOT CIRCULATE

Hawkeye Herald 4-20-61



PLACES SCULPTURE IN GALLERY — Mrs. Albert F. Kivits, chairman of the memorial and gifts committee of the Woman's Department Club, is holding the bronze sculpture of The Browning Hands just returned to the club for placement in the art collection in the Little Gallery of the clubhouse. The clasped hands of Elizabeth and Robert Browning were reproduced in this piece of sculpture by Miss Harriet Hosmer, who presented it to the Woman's Club of Terre Haute, forerunner of the Department Club, many years ago. With Mrs. Kivits on this committee are Mrs. William C. Kunkler, co-chairman; Mrs. W. D. Asbury and Miss Bonnie Farwell.

Sculpture of the Browning Hands Returned to Department Club Gallery

BY FRANCES E. HUGHES

New to the Little Gallery of the Clubhouse of the Woman's Department Club is a piece of sculpture which has actually been the property of the club for many years.

Now that it is placed with other art treasures of the club, many of them in the Little Gallery on the second floor of the clubhouse, it is hoped that they will serve as a nucleus for a small, but good, collection of art there.

The bronze cast is The Browning Hands, clasped hands of Elizabeth and Robert Browning, made by Miss Harriet Hosmer many years ago. It is believed to be one of only five casts ever made from the original mold.

THE STORY of the bit of sculpture goes back many years in the history of this city to the existence of the Woman's Club of Terre Haute, which was founded in 1879 with a limited membership. In 1920, it joined with other clubs to form the Woman's Department Club.

From February until April of 1889, Harriet Hosmer visited in

Terre Haute with a distant cousin, Mrs. Charles Fuller, and Mr. Fuller, who lived in the 400 block on North Center Street. This was during her period of retirement when she was making scientific investigations here.

Emeline Fairbanks Mem. Library

The sculptress became interested in the Woman's Club and was a speaker on the subject of the Brownings at a study program of the Young Woman's Club, formed by daughters of members of the other club in 1891. The meeting was held at the Chauncey Rose Home. She also attended meetings in the Winter of 1890 and again in 1897 of the Art Association of Indianapolis, to which organization she presented the plaster cast of her famous Browning Hands.

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WHEN MISS HOSMER presented the bronze cast to the local club,

she was made an honorary member of that organization. On a card with the cast reads: "To the Terre Haute Woman's Club with affectionate regards, Harriett Hosmer, Terre Haute, Ind., March 10, 1898."

The early club had no regular meeting place so the hands were passed from one member to another, which did not prove satisfactory. One member was said to have permitted her son to take the bronze away to college with him. Another said, "I wouldn't have them in my house! They look spooky, if you ask me."

Eventually, they were placed in the Emeline Fairbanks Memorial Library as a loan, with two provisions—that they be displayed in a glass case during open hours and kept in a safe during closed hours. The club provided both.

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A FEW YEARS AGO, they were placed in the Swope Art Gallery on a loan basis. Recently they were returned to the clubhouse, where they will remain in the Little Gallery from now on. A special spot will be set up there for their display.

Harriet Hosmer was born Oct. 9, 1830. She was left an orphan when quite young and was reared in the family of a relative in Watertown, Mass. A daughter of the house married Charles Fuller, who came to Terre Haute as an executive of the Vandalia Railroad, and it was she whom the sculptress visited here. Her interest in sculpture started as a child when she modeled from a clay pit in the garden of her home.

After her elementary education, Miss Hosmer attended Mrs. Sedwick's private school in Lennox for three years. This was followed by lessons in drawing, modeling and anatomy in Boston. When she decided to make sculpture her life work, she applied for admittance to several medical schools for the study of anatomy. One school after another turned her down since women were not then accepted, but she was finally able to study at the Missouri Medical College of St. Louis.

+ + +

IN ROME IN 1853, when she was studying there with the leading English sculptor, John Gibson, she met Robert and Elizabeth Brownings and they became close friends of hers. Both were English poets, whose place in English literature was high, and they spent much of their lives in Italy.

Miss Hosmer had made a special study of hands, and she asked permission of the couple to make a study of their hands. They agreed, on condition that she make the cast herself. The sculptress made many outstanding pieces of art but her Browning hands proved to be her most famous. She died Feb. 21, 1908, in Watertown, Mass., where she had retired.

Of the original five casts made of the hands, four have been definitely located and it is pre-

sumed that the one at the Department Club here is the fifth since she personally presented it here.

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ONE BRONZE is in the National Gallery in London, England; one she gave to two personal friends in the Chicago Browning Society; one is in an Eastern woman's college, and the fourth was given by the sculptress to Kate Field, who later presented it to Lilian Whiting of Boston. The three women were closely associated. Miss Whiting later gave it to the Browning collection of the Armstrong collection Library of Baylor University in Waco, Tex. The American Broadcasting Company used that cast in 1952 on John Daly's program.

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

How the Browning Hands came to Terre Haute

TG OCT 5 1980



Swope Director Robert Kinsman with 'the Hands'

Community Affairs File
Hosmer Harriet
Cont. (T.H.)

By FRANCES E.
HUGHES

Displayed in a glass case on a pedestal in Gallery No. Three of the Sheldon Swope Art Gallery is the sculpture of the Browning Hands, on loan to the gallery from the owner, the Woman's Department Club of Terre Haute.

This is part of the gallery's exhibit of its collection of 19th Century American Art.

This rare and valuable small piece of bronze sculpture is one of Terre Haute's art treasures. It is believed to be one of only five casts ever made from the original mold.

Of the original casts made of the sculpture, four have been definitely located and it is presumed that the one at the gallery is the fifth since the sculptress, Harriet Hosmer, personally presented it to the local woman's club on March 10, 1898.

One bronze of the Browning Hands is in the National Gallery in London, England; one the sculptress gave to two personal friends in the Chicago Browning Society, one is in an Eastern woman's college, and the fourth was given by the sculptress to Kate Field, who later presented it to Lillian Whiting of Boston, who in turn presented it to the Browning Collection of the Armstrong Collection Library of Baylor University in Waco, Texas.

Terre Haute

Vigo County Public Library

(true)

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Community Affairs File

The bronze cast of the Browning Hands portrays the clasped hands of the famous English poets, Elizabeth and Robert Browning, who became close friends of Harriet Hosmer in Rome in 1853 when the sculptress was studying there with the leading English sculptor, John Gibson. The Brownsings spent most of their lives in Italy.

Miss Hosmer was born in October of 1830. She was left an orphan when quite young and was reared in the family of a relative in Watertown, Mass. A daughter of the house married Charles Fuller, who came to Terre Haute as an executive of the Vandalia Railroad, also visited here in the Winter of 1890, 1891 and again in 1897.

She died February 21, 1908, in Watertown, Mass., where she lived after her retirement.

The sculptress was a speaker on the subject of the Brownings at a study program of the Young Woman's Club, formed by daughters of members of the Woman's Club, in 1891 at the Chauncey Rose Home. She also attended meetings of the Art Association of Indianapolis, to which she presented a plaster cast of her famous Browning Hands.

Since the early club had no regular meeting place, the Browning

Hands were first passed from one member to another. One member was even said to have permitted her son to take the bronze sculpture away to college with him.

Another said, "I wouldn't have them in my house. They look spooky, if you ask me."

Eventually, the piece of bronze sculpture was placed on loan to the Emeline Fairbanks Memorial Library with two provisions — that it be placed in a glass case during open hours and kept in a safe during closed hours. Later, the "Hands" were on display in the Little Gallery of the Woman's Department Club clubhouse, until it was felt that protection was insufficient there and the sculpture was placed on loan to Swope where it has been ever since.

The Browning Hands proved to be Miss Hosmer's most famous sculpture, although she made many outstanding pieces of work.

After her elementary education, the sculptress attended Mrs. Sedwick's private school in Lennox

for three years. This was followed by lessons in drawing, modeling and anatomy in Boston. When she decided that sculpture was her life work, she applied for admittance to several medical schools to study anatomy but one school after another turned her down. Women were not

Miss Hosmer visited the Fullers here from February until April of 1889 and during her stay was made an honorary member of the Woman's Club of Terre Haute, founded in 1879 with a

limited membership and in 1920 joined with other clubs to form the Woman's Department Club.

It was because of her pleasure in attending the meetings of the small organization that the sculptress presented her piece of art to the Woman's Club. She was then in retirement and made scientific investigations while she was here. Miss Hosmer then accepted in medical schools.

Finally, Miss Hosmer was able to study at the

Missouri Medical College in St. Louis.

She made a special study of hands, and when she asked her friends, the Brownings, for permission to make a study of their hands, they agreed. However, there was the provision that she make the cast herself, which she did.

This is but one of the many works of art and literature that Terre Haute can be proud of and whose beauty, importance and interesting history is not generally known.

Somo Interesting Reminiscences By a Great Woman.

July 1878

The city of Terre Haute is honored by the presence of a genius known to fame, a woman who has been the companion and intimate of the world's celebrities during the last forty years. Harriet Hosmer needs no introduction to the patrons of art and literature, or even to the moderately informed in contemporaneous history. She is known to them all as the great American sculptress resident at Rome. Comparatively few have studied her personal history and informed themselves as to the thoroughness of her profession which after all is the substantial basis of her successful career.

Miss Hosmer was born in Watertown, N. Y., the daughter of a physician of liberal culture and progressive views. As a young girl she was rather delicate and for the purpose primarily of improving her physical condition she exercised herself in athletic sports to a degree quite beyond the fashion for girls at that period. Riding, rowing, shooting, skating, swimming were among her favorite pastimes. In these outdoor exercises she not only regained health and physical vigor, but also acquired the easy manner, the graceful movement in action and the self-possession in repose which contributed to that subsequent delightful composure which characterized her social intercourse with the great and the learned.

After completing her school education she took up the study of anatomy under her father's tuition, as the preparation for admission to a medical college at St. Louis, in which she completed the full course of anatomical study.

This was not with a view to engaging in the practice of medicine or surgery, but to acquaint herself with the human form for the purposes of art. She had for some time been conscious of a longing to do something original and had discovered a predilection for the sculptor's art. Her father, recognizing the talent, encouraged the aspiration of his daughter, who completed her first original work the next year after leaving the St. Louis school. It was "Hesper, or the Evening Star."

Near the close of 1852 Miss Hosmer went to Rome, where she was fortunate enough to become a pupil of John Gibson, the great Welsh-English sculptor, who spent the last fifty years of his life in Rome. She made rapid progress and during the next two decades modeled many busts and statues for courts and libraries, and also filled numerous orders from private individuals. Puck, a statue of Thomas H. Benton, for the state of Missouri, the Queen of Palmyra in Chains, the Sleeping Fawn are among the best known. She modeled and completed the statue of Queen Isabella of Spain, for the World's Columbian Exhibition in 1893. She has resided in Rome almost continuously for the last forty-five years, returning to visit friends only occasionally. In 1857 she paid a brief visit to the United States, but after that did not return again for more than twenty years. Her present visit is the longest ever made since she first went abroad to begin her practical study under a master of classic art.

Miss Hosmer is the guest of Mrs. Sarah J. Fuller, 447 North Center avenue, where she has for some time been quietly engaged on what she refers to as a "mystery."

This article, which is not intended as a biographical sketch or an interview, owes its inspiration to a very delightful evening passed with her and a few

conspicuous in art and letters, and gave a pleasing account of her early impressions of the Eternal City. There was no break or hesitancy in her pleasing story. Mention of one name seemed to lead up to another, and she glided smoothly from one incident to another as naturally as if each was a part of the same continuous narrative. She spoke of Gibson's love of the Greek subject and his entire devotion to classic art, both as to subject and treatment. He was absent-minded and eccentric. Travelling with him on the continent she observed that he carried his hat box with him always, but never opened it. "Why do you carry that box on a journey?" she inquired. "Because," he replied, "three is the perfect Greek number and when I have three parcels of luggage I never leave one, or I should miss it instantly if it were lost."

Traveling on a railway carriage in England the porter asked him at what station he had come aboard. "I don't know, I'm sure," replied Gibson. "What is your destination?" again queried the porter. "How should I know?" he replied. "Are you a fool?" asked the porter. "No, I'm a sculptor."

Gibson saw a new statue and inquired the subject. "That is 'The Pearl Diver,'" replied the attendant, and observing the name made no impression, he added, "Schiller's Pearl Diver." And pray, who is Schiller," queried the sculptor. The truth is he knew absolutely nothing but his classic art, and desired to know nothing more.

At Rome Miss Hosmer first met Robert and Elizabeth Browning, between whom and herself a lasting and intimate friendship was formed. Mr. Browning met her one Saturday, holding a check in his hand. "This," said he, "I have just received from Tichnor & Fields, Boston. It is a gratuity. Come with us on a picnic excursion tomorrow and enjoy it." So a quartette of them repaired to a pleasant lake, fifteen miles from Rome, the next day to celebrate the gift.

She first met Nathaniel Hawthorne at Rome, while he was writing the "Marble Fawn." He was introduced to her by a mutual friend, made a remark about the weather and then blushed to the roots of his hair. He was a very shy man, especially in the presence of strangers. Miss Hosmer asked Hawthorne whether or not it was true that he used to jump out of the back window at his residence, in Lenox, and hide when a visitor was announced. "Yes, it is true," said he, "and that window was the best door in my house." He was moody; living in the same house with his sister at Salem for three years and never speaking to her. His marriage to a woman of well balanced mind improved him.

James T. Fields of Boston visited Hawthorne at Salem and found him despondent; wanted a manuscript from him and was told he had nothing and would never write more. Urged by Mr. Fields to arouse himself, the author at last told him there was a worthless manuscript in a drawer which he intended to destroy. Fields slipped it into his own

and thus preserved the "Scarlet Letter," a masterpiece.

Miss Hosmer was the friend of the great Salvini, of Fannie Kemble, of Lord Lytton, of Ristori, of the distinguished Americans who visited Rome, of Irving and Terry and Mansfield. She was the intimate friend of Charlotte Cushman, and having once expressed a desire to look at an audience from the stage—"You shall be gratified tonight," said Miss Cushman. And she was, going on at Booth's theater as leader of the gypsies in support of the star in "Meg Merrilies," and stirring the gauldron in the incantation scene. She was not recognized by friends in her gypsy dress, but in the green room afterwards, being rated on the hit she made, confessed she had made

dimensions colossal in bronze. "Perhaps I will be sent to model his boots," she said, "but I am not good enough, and then, also, he was not interested in such work. So the order was declined."

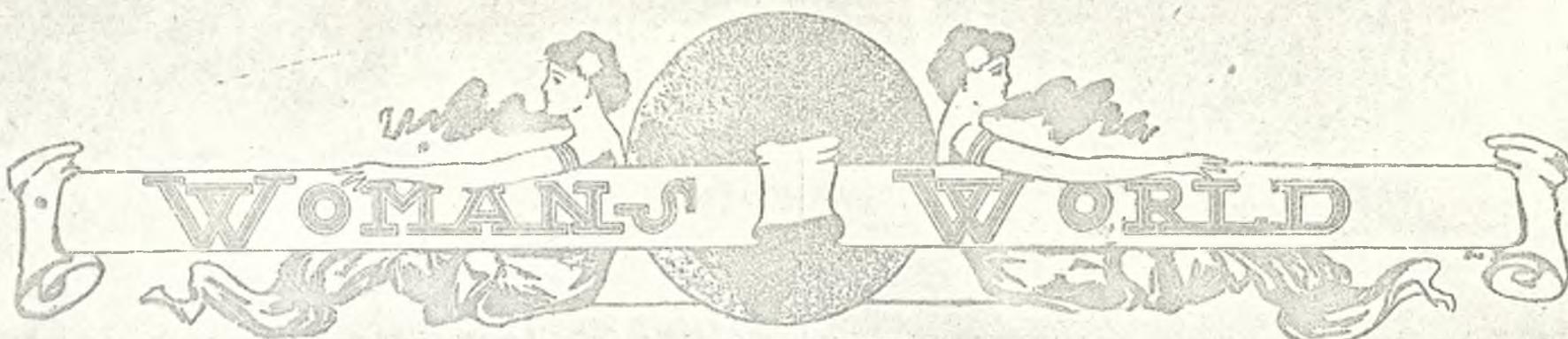
She deprecates the desecration of art by the use of all kinds of cheap pictures, and especially by the perversion of it to the alleged embellishment of newspaper columns by hasty drawings and imperfect sketches.

Miss Hosmer differs from her famous instructor in respect of subjects by taking other than the classic; but whatever the subject she gives it classical treatment.

"Don't go to Rome," says Miss Hosmer, "it is spoiled in being made a very poor imitation of a modern city, noisy, unkempt, filled with curious people. When I went there in the old days the pope was supreme; the quiet was perfect; a student could pursue his studies or his art unmolested and enjoy the classical atmosphere of the ancient city, without care, without style or ceremony. There were freedom and fellowship and security and happiness unknown to the modern resident or visitor."

When asked whether or not she would return to Rome, Miss Hosmer replied: "Yes, I must go back; there is unfinished work awaiting me and I must finish it, however strong are the attachments to my early home and friends."

VIGO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA
Communitiy Affairs File
14504



(By MRS. B. B. WHITE)

THE CAST of the Browning Hands, an art treasure in real bronze, is now a permanent possession of Terre Haute. The cast was made by Harriet Hosmer and given by her to the Terre Haute Woman's club. Just the other day this art treasure was presented to you—to Terre Haute. These prosaic sentences should convey a wealth of sentiment to all who read. For, from the Alpha to the Omega of the story, poetry, romance, art work, and loyal friendship are intertwined.

Some who read may wonder how Miss Hosmer, who knew the Brownings intimately—way across the water—should have made this gift to a Terre Haute club. After living abroad for many years, studying and working along the line of her chosen art work, her thoughts were turned to a cousin who lived in this Indiana town. This cousin, bereft of a son, a daughter, and her husband, was living alone in a large house, in North Center street. An affection that had begun in girlhood days was revived between these two women. So in her cousin's home and in our midst, Harriet Hosmer made her home for several years.

There she had not only her own bed room, but another room was given over to her for her work room. Great mysteries surrounded that particular work room, for no one was admitted, and who is there but craves to know the hidden treasure? Was a great masterpiece in marble being created? Or were the hours spent there by this interesting woman whiled away with the puzzle of perpetual motion? Who shall say?

However, there were recreation times. Congenial spirits were formed, acquaintances ripened into friendship, and thus Harriet Hosmer came to know the women who made up the membership of the Terre Haute Woman's club.

One season the program of the Woman's club was made up entirely of a study of Browning. Miss Hosmer was asked to talk to them and in appreciation of her personal kindness and courtesy to them, as well as in appreciation of her high rank as a sculptress of merit, she was made an honorary member of the club.

Now this club has given her gift to them—the Browning Hands—to our city. Lowell wrote that the gift without the giver is bare. In a peculiar way this gift to our city carries with it the giver. For in it the giver—the Terre Haute Woman's club—has given its all. Its cherished records of deeds and achievements are but a memory, for that organization has ceased to exist.

That you may know something of the ideals and the actual workings of that club, harken to its story.

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Individual Attention.

Once upon a time, a group of women banded themselves together and started the Terre Haute Woman's club. This nucleus grew to be an integral part of the life of our city. The membership never exceeded three dozen. Yet in that small number were to be found the pioneers in various lines of women's work that aimed to make Terre Haute a better and more beautiful place to live. That group of women were splendid home-makers and they were makers of a spirit of loyalty and devotion to their home city. They built stronger than they knew, those pioneer women, and after 40 years' growth their members were found to be a vital part of the life of this community.

Promote Women's Interest In Civic Affairs.

Tender ties or mutual interest will always fill the hearts of the members of that club whenever its memories are recalled. Names of those who were identified with its history will always live in the records of our pioneer workers in many branches of civic work. Our public library had for some of its earliest advocates members of this club. They stood for better public schools and for free kindergartens. Yes, young reader of the present generation, time was when there were no kindergartens. Members of this club believed in equal citizenship in the days when advocates of that cause were few. They encouraged women to interest themselves in the doings of the city council, the city board of education, and even in occasional court proceedings.

Naturally, charity work and child welfare were subjects to which these women gave attention. In the records of our board of education, the Public Health Nursing association, war work, children's guardians, the Rose Ladies' Aid society, and various church organizations are to be found the names of women who were members of this club. The plans for the first baby week ever given in our city were materially helped by this organization.

Many women who won prominence years ago as educators were enrolled as members. Some of those of whom we are proud today, in our institutions of learning, answered—"here"—when the last roll call of the Terre Haute Woman's club was read. So from such a group of women comes this work of art to the people of Terre Haute, and it may be said that in the hearts and minds of these women were started the seeds that eventually grew into our present day department club. Recognizing greater good for the community in a large department club they made the sacrifice of the individual club to that end and so the Terre Haute Woman's club went out of existence.

Last May (1922) after the Woman's club was no more, a meeting was called of those who had composed its membership to make final disposition of its valuable possessions. Word had been received

that a fancy price could be obtained for the clasped hands of Robert and Elizabeth Browning. Art Journals told that there were three of these "Hands" made by Miss Hosmer; and that one of the three was owned in Terre Haute. But there was no money which could buy the "Hands" owned by this club. The gift had been made through ties of friendship. And be it cherished as another bit of evidence that sentiment is abroad in our land, notwithstanding some short sighted individuals who cry out that the world has gone money-mad. We will cherish this gift with all the sentiment of poetry, art and romance which it holds. So it was decided to place the "Hands" permanently in the Fairbanks Library.

As another inheritance from this club, the library is richer for a framed picture of William Makepeace Thackeray, and some autographed letters of Miss Hosmer's. Also, in the library is to be seen the statue of Hebe, which was placed there by the Woman's club in memory of Sarah D. Tennant, one of the founders of the club.

Appropriate Placing of the "Hands."

On July 28, the committee selected for the purpose, made the formal presentation of these gifts to the board of education, members of which also are our library trustees. The committee expressed appreciation to the trustees for their courtesy and promptness in supplying a safe receptacle for the permanent home of the Browning Hands. The committee also expressed gratitude to Mrs. Hughes, the librarian, for her interest and helpfulness, and in whose care the "Hands" now are instructed.

It seems very fitting that the Public Library should be the permanent home of this bronze cast, because every one may feel free to enter an educational center where something of interest to everyone may be found. The Browning Hands should instill high motives and should create broader visions in all the boys and girls, and in all the young men and young women who are pursuing lines of study in our various institutions of learning.

Robert Browning and his wife, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, stand high as poets, beloved by students of literature. The cast of their hands in unperishable bronze, is symbolic of the immortal love of a husband and a wife. It will bring to the minds of our young people thoughts of stability and permanence in connection with romance. If students know Robert Browning they will know something of England, and O, to be in England when 'tis April there. If they know Mrs. Browning they will know Aurora Leigh and sunny Italy. If they know Harriet Hosmer they will know a woman who stands as an American sculptress of merit. They will know that she knew and loved them as friends. They will

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know that she lived in our own beloved Terre Haute, where she and her cousin had a devoted affection one for the other.

Then when the students see the bronze cast of the "Hands" they will know that here in our own Hoosier home town Harriet Hosmer found congenial women. That mutual admiration grew between these friends and the sculptress; that sympathy for one another's efforts in various lines of usefulness, was helpful both to her who had won fame in the world's art centers, and to those who were faithfully doing their bit at home.

Then the students will make link by link a chain that will go from England to Italy and to our United States and to the banks of the Wabash to where the Browning Hands rest in Terre Haute.

May they then be inspired to always remember this town. Into whatever life work they select, may they do something, sometime, that will bring credit to our city. May they do their bit to make this a city full of loyal devoted citizens. May they become men and women interested in good government, better schools, attractive homes filled with home makers who will rear happy children, whether their doorstep be attached to cottage home or mansion. For all this was in the vision of the giver of this gift to you—the people of Terre Haute.

—B. B. W.

PERSONAL AND SOCIETY

Mrs. Hull of Ohio, who has been visiting Mrs. W. L. Law of Edgewood Grove, left today (Friday) for California to remain indefinitely. Mrs. Emil Froehl entertained with a luncheon for Mrs. Hull at her home one day last week, and Tuesday evening Miss Alice Warren entertained with a dinner at Bridgetown.

Mr. and Mrs. John Hickey, 1.00



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Emeline Fairbanks Mem. Library

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Sculpture of the Browning Hands Returned to Department Club Gallery

Star Je 28-1961.
BY FRANCES E. HUGHES

New to the Little Gallery of the Clubhouse of the Woman's Department Club is a piece of sculpture which has actually been the property of the club for many years.

Now that it is placed with other art treasures of the club, many of them in the Little Gallery on the second floor of the clubhouse, it is hoped that they will serve as a nucleus for a small, but good, collection of art there.

The bronze cast is The Browning Hands, clasped hands of Elizabeth and Robert Browning, made by Miss Harriet Hosmer many years ago. It is believed to be one of only five casts ever made from the original mold.

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THE STORY of the bit of sculpture goes back many years in the history of this city to the existence of the Woman's Club of Terre Haute, which was founded in 1879 with a limited membership. In 1920, it joined with other clubs to form the Woman's Department Club.

From February until April of 1889, Harriet Hosmer visited in

Terre Haute with a distant cousin, Mrs. Charles Fuller, and Mr. Fuller, who lived in the 400 block on North Center Street. This was during her period of retirement when she was making scientific investigations here.

The sculptress became interested in the Woman's Club and was a speaker on the subject of the Brownings at a study program of the Young Woman's Club, formed by daughters of members of the other club in 1891. The meeting was held at the Chauncey Rose Home. She also attended meetings in the Winter of 1890 and again in 1897 of the Art Association of Indianapolis, to which organization she presented the plaster cast of her famous Browning Hands.

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WHEN MISS HOSMER presented the bronze cast to the local club,

she was made an honorary member of that organization. On a card with the cast reads: "To the Terre Haute Woman's Club with affectionate regards, Harriett Hosmer, Terre Haute, Ind., March 10, 1898."

The early club had no regular meeting place so the hands were passed from one member to another, which did not prove satisfactory. One member was said to have permitted her son to take the bronze away to college with him. Another said, "I wouldn't have them in my house! They look spooky, if you ask me."

Eventually, they were placed in the Emeline Fairbanks Memorial Library as a loan, with two provisions—that they be displayed in a glass case during open hours and kept in a safe during closed hours. The club provided both.

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A FEW YEARS AGO, they were placed in the Swope Art Gallery on a loan basis. Recently they were returned to the clubhouse, where they will remain in the Little Gallery from now on. A special spot will be set up there for their display.

Harriet Hosmer was born Oct. 9, 1830. She was left an orphan when quite young and was reared in the family of a relative in Watertown, Mass. A daughter of the house married Charles Fuller, who came to Terre Haute as an executive of the Vandalia Railroad, and it was she whom the sculptress visited here. Her interest in sculpture started as a child when she modeled from a clay pit in the garden of her home.

After her elementary education, Miss Hosmer attended Mrs. Sedwick's private school in Lenox for three years. This was followed by lessons in drawing, modeling and anatomy in Boston. When she decided to make sculpture her life work, she applied for admittance to several medical schools for the study of anatomy. One school after another turned her down since women were not then accepted, but she was finally able to study at the Missouri Medical College of St. Louis.

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IN ROME IN 1853, when she was studying there with the leading English sculptor, John Gibson, she met Robert and Elizabeth Brownings and they became close friends of hers. Both were English poets, whose place in English literature was high, and they spent much of their lives in Italy.

Miss Hosmer had made a special study of hands, and she asked permission of the couple to make a study of their hands. They agreed, on condition that she make the cast herself. The sculptress made many outstanding pieces of art but her Browning hands proved to be her most famous. She died Feb. 21, 1908, in Watertown, Mass., where she had retired.

Of the original five casts made of the hands, four have been definitely located and it is pre-

sumed that the one at the Department Club here is the fifth since she personally presented it here.

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ONE BRONZE is in the National Gallery in London, England; one she gave to two personal friends in the Chicago Browning Society; one is in an Eastern woman's college, and the fourth was given by the sculptress to Kate Field, who later presented it to Lilian Whiting of Boston. The three women were closely associated. Miss Whiting later gave it to the Browning collection of the Armstrong collection Library of Baylor University in Waco, Tex. The American Broadcasting Company used that cast in 1952 on John Daly's program.